

Carnal knowledge and irony assignment

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

T. Coraghessan Boyle uses irony in his short story Carnal Knowledge, which gives it a humorous tone. The way the narrator reacts to ironic events shapes our understanding of both him, and the meaning of the story as a whole; although humans can adapt to their surroundings to get what they want, they will always return to their original basic set of morals and standards. The first use of irony is arguably the most humorous, which foreshadows the ridiculousness of the narrators actions throughout the story. It also defines the narrators desire for female acquaintance.

He wanted a female so badly, not a divorced mother in her thirties, that he would do it seemed almost anything to get one. If it was not clear when Alena's dog Alf, peed on him and he didn't care, then it is even more clear when he decides to be a vegan, like her. If you had taken work off to spend a day alone on the beach and a woman's dog walked over and peed on you, don't you think you'd be angry at her? As a reader, we expected him to be angry, and when he wasn't. It was clear how badly he wanted to be with her, and that he wouldn't stop at much to achieve his goal.

It didn't take Alena long to rope the narrator into her lifestyle. In fact, it took her one night. The next morning he was up protesting with her and her friends. That is, until he got knocked out. Yet, this didn't phase him. First he gets peed on by a dog, next he gets knocked out. for a guy who grew up eating meat, this is where one should wonder if this girls really worth it. After the narrator put his life on the line a third time when he released the turkeys, Alena informed him she was leaving for a month with Rolfe to do more of her animal rights activist activities.

Talk about irony! He put his liberty and safety on the line for her, and she left him. After all that, everything he put himself through to be with her, all of the “ changes” he made to his thought. At the start of the story, he was a normal, meat loving American, and to please her, he altered his diet to become a vegan. It was clear the only reason he had done the things he did was for her, and she left. To get what he wanted, the narrator made a one eighty with his beliefs, consequently changing who he was as a person, briefly at least.

That is why when she leaves, he reverts back to his old ways, broke down and had a burger. It’s funny and ironic, that he was dragged through that, believed truly that he had become an animal rights activist and nearly quit his job for a woman he just met. Then just like that, it was over. People do that, stay the way they are, or the way they’ve been brought up. Maybe it wasn’t so ironic after all that Jim started eating meat in the end. The reader should have known how ridiculous a situation Jim was getting himself into when Alena’s dog, Alf, peed on him.

The narrators actions proved what a person will do to get what they want, and the outcome defined how difficult it is to truly change a person and what they believe in. This was achieved through the authors use of irony with the dog the kick boxer and the burger to create a humorous tone that gave the reader clues as to what might happen and what was going on with the narrator. He did anything he could to reach his ultimate goal, but in the end he stuck to the things he was taught growing up. Its something humans always have and probably always will do, be stubborn.